

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 L-03 IGA-02 EB-08 AGRE-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /037 W

-----311152Z 088216 /23

P R 310950Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6240

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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RABAT FOR AGATT KUHL

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: EAID EAGR TS

SUBJECT: PL-480 ALLOCATION FOR TUNISIA: FORMAL

REQUEST RECEIVED

REF: TUNIS 1691; TUNIS 1711

1. TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY MARCH 30 PRESENTED EMBASSY WITH FORMAL REQUEST FOR 100,000 METRIC TONS OF WHEAT UNDER TITLE I OF PL-480. IN ORAL PRESENTATION TO DCM, TUNISIAN OFFICIALS STATED THIS WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY REQUEST FOR 100,000 TONS OF WHEAT UNDER TITLE II. TUNISIAN NOTE (TEXT BY SEPTTEL) WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTION OF DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN VARIOUS PROVINCES AND BALANCE SHEET PREPARED BY OFFICE OF CEREALS SHOWING DEFICIT FOR 1977 - 78 SEASON OF 940,000 TONS OF WHEAT, WHICH WOULD BE BY FAR LARGEST DEFICIT TUNISIA HAS EVER SUFFERED AND EQUAL TO ENTIRE CONSUMPTION FOR 1974-75 SEASON.

2. TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT NOW ESTIMATES PRODUCTION

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THIS YEAR WILL BE NO MORE THAN 400,000 TONS WHICH, TOGETHER WITH PREDICTED STOCKS OF 50,000 TONS ON JULY 1, WILL LEAVE DEFICIT OF 940,000 TONS AGAINST EXPECTED USAGE OF 1,390,000 TONS (1,150,000) TONS CONSUMPTION, 140,000 TONS SEED AND 100,000 TONS CARRY FORWARD STOCKS). THIS WOULD APPEAR TO REPRESENT A WHEAT CROP LOSS OF MORE THAN 60 PERCENT. WHILE

MURRAY OF USDA AT TIME OF HIS VISIT (TUNIS 1691)
PREDICTED 40 PERCENT LOSS ASSUMING RAINS WITHIN ONE
WEEK OR 10 DAYS, THERE WAS NO RAIN FOR TWO WEEKS
THAT FOLLOWED MURRAY'S VISIT.

3. DURING DISCUSSION OF REQUEST, TUNISIAN OFFICIALS
STATED THAT IT WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY ADDITIONAL REQUESTS
FOR HELP TO CANADIANS AND EEC (BOTH MULILATERALLY
AND BILATERALLY). THEY EMPHASIZED SERIOUS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL DAMAGE THAT COULD BE DONE BY THIS ENORMOUS
SHORTFALL IN TERMS OF INFLATION, DRAWDOWN ON FOREIGN
EXCHANGE, RURAL NUTRITION AND SEVERE BLOW TO FITH
PLAN. EVEN WITH ASSISTANCE, TUNISIA MIGHT BE OBLIGED
TO INCREASE COMMERICAL PURCHASES TO 600,000 TONS,
DOUBLE ANY PREVIOUS LEVEL.

4. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT VOUCH FOR PRECISION OF GOT
PREDICTIONS, THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT SITUATION
EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND COMES AT CRITICAL POINT IN
TUNISIA'S DEVELOPMENT. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND AFFIRMATIVE
RESPONSE TO TUNISIAN REQUEST BOTH UNDER FY 77 (TUNIS
1711) AND FY 78 PROGRAMS. WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL TO
HAVE ANY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS THAT WE SHOULD PASS TO
TUNISIANS, WHO ARE IN PROCESS OF DRAWING TOGETHER

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION FOR US. REQUEST AS EARLY
RESPONSE AS POSSIBLE. TUNISIANS WILL BADLY NEED
SOME INDICATION FROM US OF WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT AS
THEY DRAW UP THEIR OVERALL PLAN FOR MEETING THIS
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SITUATION.
MULCAHY

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WHEAT, PL 480 TITLE 1
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TUNIS02204
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770110-0625
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977031/aaaaaaajd.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 158707ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TUNIS 1691, 77 TUNIS 1711
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2931554
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PL-480 ALLOCATION FOR TUNISIA: FORMAL REQUEST RECEIVED
TAGS: EAID, EAGR, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/158707ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009